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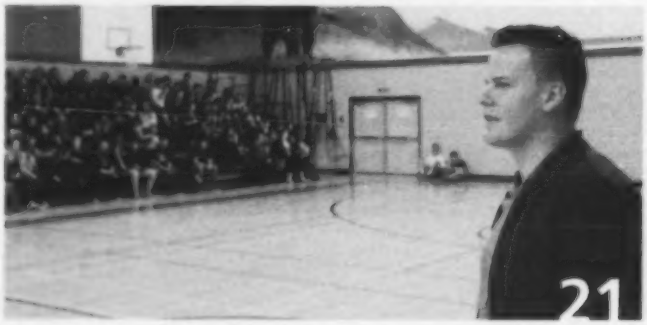

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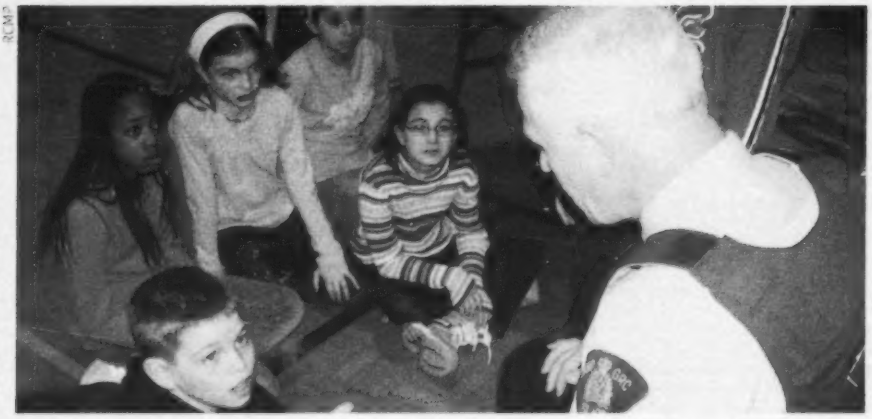
ON THE RIGHT PATH



RCMP

Ideally, when a young person first comes into contact with a police officer, the experience is a positive one that jump-starts a relationship of trust. This isn't always the case but, more and more, police are seeking ways to engage with youth at an earlier age and intervene before criminal activity becomes more serious or a life-long pattern.

In this issue on youth and young offenders, we look at the ways in which the RCMP, other police agencies and community partners get involved in the lives of young people to reduce the number of situations requiring enforcement and get youth the support they need as quickly as possible.

For our cover story, Deidre Seiden speaks to RCMP officers and their community partners in three provinces about youth programs designed to identify and engage young people who may be headed down the wrong path. She also interviews a former gang member from British Columbia, Jordan Buna, about his new life speaking to school kids about making the right choices. And when he speaks, they listen.

Also in our cover section, Sigrid Forberg talks to police and health partners in New Brunswick about ACCESS, a research project that strives to identify youth with mental health problems and make sure they don't slip through the cracks. Sigrid also writes about the RCMP's Terrorism Prevention Program, a tool that trains police to better identify those at risk of radicalization to violence — often youth and young adults — and provide support to divert them away from violent ideologies.

In Winnipeg, Man., Dr. Carolyn Snider runs a pilot program reaching out to youth who come into the emergency department with injuries due to violence, and connects them with social workers. Snider says the program, which also involves the Winnipeg Police Service, aims to break the cycle of violence. And so far, the results are very encouraging.

Natasha Boojihawon in Greater Manchester, U.K., describes the Girls in Gangs project, a resource aimed at young people, teachers and youth workers to raise awareness about gangs. Students work with local police and a media arts company to develop their own drama piece and produce a documentary about the risks of gang involvement and violence against girls.

In Chicago, Ill., police who are trained in crisis intervention can now take a course specific to youth in crisis. The training makes officers aware of mental illness among young people and gives them de-escalation tools.

And the City of Gatineau in collaboration with Gatineau Police has developed a three-pronged program to discourage youth-driven graffiti across the city. The program involves graffiti prevention, cleanup and painting only on sanctioned walls. Importantly, the number of complaints about graffiti has been cut in half since the program was launched.

Finally, we encourage you to read our panel discussion in which participants share their thoughts about the biggest social problems facing youth in their own communities. Their responses are honest and thought provoking.

We hope this issue provides some good ideas about being involved in youth prevention and diversion programs as early as possible, and about getting the targeted training and awareness that police need to deal with challenging situations involving young people. ■

— Katherine Aldred
gazette@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

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PUBLISHER: Karyn Curtis

EDITOR: Katherine Aldred

WRITERS: Sigrid Forberg and Deidre Seiden

WEB PUBLISHER: Richard Vieira

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Lisa McDonald-Bourg

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HOW TO REACH US:

RCMP *Gazette*
73 Leikin Drive,
M8 Building, 1st Floor, Room 801
Ottawa, ON K1A 0R2
CANADA

Phone: 613-843-4570
E-mail: gazette@rcmp-grc.gc.ca
Internet: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/gazette

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ON THE COVER:

After completing the six-week Difference Maker program, RCMP officers and students have fun playing each other in a friendly game of basketball.
Photo: Cst. Dave Winberg, RCMP Forensic Identification Section

"SKIPPY" TAKES A HIT IN CRASH COLLISION COURSE

By Deidre Seiden

As Cst. Les Brauner plowed into Skippy with the white pick-up truck, what surprised him the most was how loud the impact was.

"It was unmistakable," says Brauner, from the Saskatoon Police Service. "Now, if I was ever asked in a court about a hit-and-run investigation where the person said they didn't know they hit the person, I can say from experience, it's highly unlikely they wouldn't know."

Skippy — a dummy — was hit repeatedly by police during a pedestrian/bicycle investigation course hosted by the Saskatoon Police Service.

The Saskatoon Police Service recognized a need for collision analysts to have extra training in this area. Car-pedestrian and car-bicycle crashes are unique and require specialized training to help collision analysts investigate them.

Brauner put a call out to other police agencies in Saskatchewan to see if there was interest.

The RCMP and police from Moose Jaw, Regina and Prince Albert joined the Saskatoon police and trainers from the Institute of Police Technology and Management based in Florida, for a 40-hour course in Saskatoon.

It began in the classroom with practical testing where participants learned the formulas to prove Newton's three laws of motion. Then they headed out to the parking lot with a pick-up truck and Skippy to prove the formulas work.

"We struck Skippy several times and the speeds were coming in close to our actual radar speeds so that confirmed to every candidate that what was taught and applied was correct," says Cpl. Doug Green, a Forensic Collision Reconstructionist with RCMP Traffic Services in Saskatoon.

According to Saskatoon Police, last year alone, in Saskatoon, there were 53 serious or fatal crashes involving cyclists and 106 crashes involving pedestrians.

"One of the biggest reasons for what we do and why we do it is to provide answers to the family of those involved in the crash," says Brauner. "From this training, we're able to determine the speed of the vehicle at impact, the speed of the vehicle prior to the impact, how the body came into contact with the vehicle, all to be able to figure out what happened and provide that answer to the family." ▪

Saskatoon Police Service

Police in Saskatchewan take a specialized course on pedestrian and bicycle investigations.

CODE BLUE TEACHES FITNESS, DISCIPLINE

By Sigrid Forberg

A few years ago, Cst. Troy Derrick, the First Nations policing officer for the Semiahmoo First Nation in Surrey, B.C., wanted to do something to get kids in the community active.

He started informally working out with a few kids from Semiahmoo in the mornings before school, eventually expanding to include other First Nations students at the school gym. And when other students then spotted them there, they asked to join too.

So Derrick decided to open it up to all students and came up with a formal structure to the program, along with a formal name — Code Blue.

Derrick, with the help of the Surrey RCMP Youth Section and several fellow members, special constables and auxiliary constables, holds weekly sessions for high school students in the area. Each week, participants undertake fitness challenges, similar to what cadets go through at the RCMP training facility, that push their limits and foster team-building. Derrick says while everyone joins for different reasons, the benefits are universal.

"Some of them want to be police officers, some want to make friends, some just want to get fit," says Derrick. "We'd get all these meek kids who wouldn't even talk in the beginning and are now joking and bugging other people. It's really cool to see that from a Grade 8."

John Carreon had heard about Code Blue through his school when he was in Grade 11. The police training program intrigued Carreon, who aspires one day to become a police officer. After graduating last year, Carreon asked the Code Blu, facilitators if he could come back and volunteer with the program. He says it's something he looks forward to every Friday.

"I just wanted to be continually a part of it," says Carreon. "I really liked the competition you have against yourself and against your fitness levels and mental ability."

Getting the kids active was important for Derrick, but it's the lessons they learn in the process that he's seen as the greatest benefit to Code Blue.

"We didn't expect it to turn into this," says Derrick. "It's created an understanding that no one's better than anyone else; we have all walks of life participating, but that doesn't matter, and they get that because everyone sheds the same blood, sweat and tears by the end." ▪

Cpl. Alison Voth, RCMP

Students from Surrey, B.C., participate in a group exercise as part of the Code Blue program.

PARTNERSHIP IN PROACTIVE POLICING

By Deidre Seiden

Every day, RCMP Cst. Carl Garlinski and Cst. Ryan Camping of the Transit Police hit the pavement around Surrey Central, a main transportation hub and shopping district in Surrey, B.C.

"We get out of our police car and we get out on foot," says Camping. "It allows us to interact as much as we can, so we do a lot of walking."

They walk the beat around the businesses talking to the local merchants, commuters and patrons, but they're always listening and looking out for issues in the area.

"We're also listening to patrol because if there's a call coming our way, whether it be a robbery suspect, anything, we're there to help," says Camping.

This is part of a new Joint Force Operation project, which started in January, to ensure a visible police presence at the city's main transit hub.

Surrey Central has a SkyTrain station, bus loop, mall, university, recreation centre and library. Much like any high traffic area with many amenities, there's a propensity for crime and disruption.

"Our goal is to deter violence, raise public confidence and perception, reduce calls for service and ensure the livability of Surrey," says Garlinski. "We just identify issues and tackle them and get a lot of feedback from the community."

The team enforces disorder and disruption, but also focuses on proactive policing and community engagement.

Based on feedback from clients, which Garlinski and Camping collect and document, they create initiatives to target the issues identified. These include open liquor offences, loitering, drug use and dealing, transit fare evasion and shoplifting.

"We find those smaller things tend to negatively affect the perception of Surrey or the state of the neighbourhood," says Garlinksi.

While the Transit Police would police around the transit stations in Surrey and the RCMP would police all of Surrey, the joint force helps create more seamless communication between the two departments as they focus on the transit corridor throughout Surrey.

And they don't do it alone. When they started, Garlinski and Camping solicited the help of several partners in the area, including municipal bylaw services and the Surrey Crime Prevention and Outreach Society, to patrol with them on specific initiatives.

"If it was all on our shoulders it would be next to impossible," says Camping. "There are a lot of different agencies that we need help from to make this thing fly and we're all working well together."

Constables Ryan Camping (left) and Carl Garlinski patrol the Surrey Central area.

And based on the positive feedback they collect on patrol, people feel safer with them in the area, which is a win for Garlinski and Camping.

"People are happy to see us there," says Garlinski. "So if they do have a problem, they can walk up to us, they can call us and we're already there. It's reduced our response time to public complaints." •

TRAUMA DOG HAS FIRST DAY IN COURT

By Deidre Seiden

After almost five years as a member of the Delta Police Victim Services team in British Columbia (B.C.) and helping more than 750 clients get through traumatic events, Caber the trauma dog has also taken on the new role of courthouse dog at the Surrey Provincial Court.

It started about two years ago as a pilot project with the Surrey Crown counsel, where Caber would bring his stable, calm energy to support clients during pre-trial interviews in the Crown counsel office at the courthouse.

"They're revisiting their victimization and talking about what happened to them, which can be very traumatic," says Caber's handler Kim Gramlich, co-ordinator of Delta Police Victim Services. "We have Caber present and we see the same outcomes — he calms people down."

With his first trial last May, Caber can now assist vulnerable witnesses and victims, especially children, in the courtroom when they're giving testimony.

Caber underwent two years of training through Pacific Assistance Dogs Society to become the first fully certified trauma canine in Canada to do this type of work in victim services. And he is one of only a handful of dogs in Canada and the only one in B.C. that can assist in the courtroom.

"The intention behind it is the same," says Gramlich. "It's to calm victims and witnesses of crime down, lower their blood pressure, lower their heart rate and make them more comfortable so they can effectively communicate their testimony." •

After years of comforting victims of crime and trauma with the Delta Police Victim Services in B.C., Caber is doing the same for victims and witnesses of crime as a courthouse dog.

As part of the Difference Maker program, students learn that it feels good to do something positive in their community.

VACCINATING KIDS AGAINST CRIME

YOUTH PROGRAMS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

By Deidre Selden

When he was a general duty police officer, RCMP Cpl. Kevin Krygier got tired of being seen as the "bad news police," only showing up when there was a problem. And he saw the negative effect this had on youth.

He also saw the issues that police and communities were dealing with every day — kids getting involved in drugs, gangs and bullying.

"It's just anti-social, assaultive, counter-productive-type behaviours," says Krygier.

With children of his own and witnessing the struggles first-hand as a police officer, he wanted to connect with youth in a more positive way.

Krygier started the School Sports Program, where he and a team of RCMP officers from Richmond, B.C., visited schools in the area and challenged students to play them in a game of basketball. He noticed a change for the better.

"Now we go to the schools and the kids are high fiving us," says Krygier. "They can relate to us a little better and that's the whole idea."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

But it didn't stop there. Krygier, who's now in charge of crime prevention in Richmond, partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program, which fosters social responsibility and teaches youth about courage and determination.

"A difference maker is an ordinary person who does extraordinary things to help others," says Ewa Holender with the Rick Hansen School Program.

Together, they developed a pilot program called Difference Maker, and brought it to four schools in Richmond — two elementary and two secondary. The program engages and empowers students to make a positive difference in their community and to prevent youth involvement in crime. The secondary students mentor the elementary students.

While officers work directly with the students, the program also uses ambassadors, including former Olympic snowboarder Alexa Loo.

"The goal of the whole program is to get students to find their cause — the thing that they are passionate about and do something about it," says Holender. "From that, they learn the basic rule that doing good things feels good and hopefully it will encourage them to a lifetime of doing good things and making a positive difference."

The first school, Mitchell Elementary, chose to do a random acts of kindness project in the community. The random acts included cleaning up a local park and storming a city bus to hand out gift certificates to unsuspecting riders.

Krygier says there are many layers to the program. It helps students develop leadership skills, have a positive connection to their community and have a stronger relationship with the police, to name a few. And it helps police

because not only is it therapeutic for them, it also gives officers a way to engage young people and prevent negative interactions with students in the years to come.

"By doing this and creating this positive change now, we're hoping we'll be able to deter them from becoming involved in criminal activity and make them more inclined to become involved in positive things," says Krygier. "If we can do that, maybe we can change the course of how this particular generation turns out."

Programs like Different Maker are an alternative to enforcement and require a change in mindset.

"We're so wrapped up in our laws and enforcement that we've lost sight of the fact that prevention is really the key," says Krygier.

Krygier knows that it's not going to work 100 per cent of the time, but he says even if it works 60 per cent of the time, that's a significant improvement.

"It's like getting vaccination to prevent disease," says Krygier. "This is like getting vaccinated against crime."

And prevention and intervention programs are proving to be effective in communities across the country.

THE HUB MODEL

In 2011, police in Prince Albert, Sask., the third largest city in that province, were facing high crime rates. They quickly realized they couldn't arrest their way out the problem.

"It's expensive and it doesn't really help," says Cst. Matthew Gray of the Prince Albert Police Service. "We need to make the distinction between who is a bad person and who is in unfortunate circumstances because there is a huge distinction to be made there. You can't lump an angry kid in with a bad kid."

[illegible] *looked for a sustainable solution and came up with the Prince Albert Community Mobilization model, or the Hub, to build safer and healthier communities, and reduce crime and victimization.*

The Hub is an early intervention process that brings together police, social services, schools, public health and other community service agencies that take an integrated approach to connect individuals and families to services they need within 24 to 48 hours.

"The Hub model is risk driven and evidence based, so certain behaviours, certain types of things that happen in school, show that a particular youth might be on a path to what we call acutely elevated risk," says Gray.

While the Hub is not specifically for youth, a large percentage of their clients are young people and families. And by all the agencies coming together to work collaboratively they can see the full picture.

If police keep re-investing someone and don't know what else to do, they bring them to the Hub. Here, they might learn the person also has addiction issues and problems at home whereas working alone, police may never know this. Getting youth the help they need can prevent more problems down the road.

"That's the whole point of early intervention," says Gray. "Put the time and effort into early intervention so you don't have to spend a whole lot of time and effort downstream. And that's very large scope, but that's essentially what it is, the whole notion of spending a dime to save a dollar."

With the help and support of Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime (BPRC), a provincial program, the Hub model has spread from Prince Albert to 12 communities in Saskatchewan, and there are versions popping up in Ontario and the United States.

"A lot of communities wanted to recognize the work that happened in Prince Albert and were excited about the initiative," says Anna Robinson, a consultant with BPRC. "A model like this is key because it's an opportunity to intervene in those critical moments where there is risk and respond right away by connecting somebody to services, to make sure it doesn't get to a point where suppression is needed."

Sgt. Craig Nystik and Cst. Jody Colbert from the Saskatoon Police Service are part of the Hub in Saskatoon, Sask., which has been in place for a more than a year.

Nystik says the Hub allows police to achieve better outcomes by collaborating with people within the community.

"It's doing business in a different way," says Nystik. "To resolve some of these issues, you have to understand first that they cross many different disciplines. The solution is through suppression and enforcement, but also through prevention and intervention."

They're already seeing results.

"We're seeing families that aren't involved with agencies anymore because they have the connections to different programs they need to be successful," says Colbert. "We're seeing kids who were once getting in

[illegible]

trouble with the police because they weren't in school, who are now going to school."

THE WHOLE PUZZLE

The multi-agency approach is also saving success in Suffield, Man., with the Suffield Team for At-Risk Youths (STARY) program.

"The youth are our future and they're struggling," says STARY co-ordinator Tammy Thompson. "They deal with a lot of different issues. There's a lot of availability of drugs, information that is out there. Families are struggling and they need help."

STARY has been helping at-risk youths between the ages of 11 and 19 since 2002.

For years, Thompson has seen what can happen when different agencies such as the RCMP, schools, child and family services, mental health, addictions and public health work together with youth and their families on what they call case conferencing — where they all sit down at the table together to discuss the situation.

Youth who were once struggling with addictions, mental health problems and getting in trouble with the law were graduating high school and have better relationships with their families.

"Each agency has a piece of the puzzle, but we don't know what the whole picture is until we put the puzzle together," says Thompson. "Once we have all the pieces of the puzzle, then we can start to make some effective change."

Andrea Pierrucci, 24, was referred to STARY as a teenager after being arrested for drug use. She was bullied and turned to drugs to cope. Her anger affected her grades at school, her relationships at home and eventually turned into violence against her mother.

STARY changed her life. "Once I started getting more involved with STARY and I got to know Tammy more, I felt like a person," says Pierrucci. "I felt more important and I didn't feel like I was just another case number."

At STARY, she believes it is never the case — the behaviour is a symptom of the bigger issue.

"I don't know any kid who wants to be in the youth centre or criminally involved," says Thompson. "Every kid wants to be successful. Every parent I work with, regardless of their level, loves their kids. So it's just a matter of determining what interventions are required to get the family and youth back on track."

The STARY team continues to help ex-clients' lives long as it takes. They check in with the youth every month to see what they need and find out how things are going.

"We're here for the long haul," says Thompson. "When you have kids who are really at risk, it's not something that's going to turn around the next day."

For Pierrucci, as a mother of two herself now, she doesn't like to think about where she'd be today without the program's intervention. "I'd probably still be using and I probably wouldn't have a good relationship as I do with my family," says Pierrucci. "I'm now really happy with my life and where it is now and I owe a lot of that to the STARY program." ■

YOUTH CONVENTION CONNECTS KIDS TO COMMUNITY

For more than 15 years, the RCMP's Drugs and Organized Crime Awareness Service (DOCAS) in British Columbia has been doing prevention work with students of all ages with a strategy called Community Prevention Education continuum.

But instead of implementing the framework of the continuum inside schools, DOCAS is taking it out of the classroom and into the community as part of a new plan to prevention — a youth convention.

DOCAS brought the Gen Xtreme community together with students in Grades 8 and 10 in Castlemede, B.C.

"We're trying to connect the kids back to their culture, their community, the law, to the province, to the government to Canada," says Cpl. Anthony Clerici, the convention coordinator and officer in charge of DOCAS.

The first convention theme, "Control of Happiness," was chosen by the community. "We talked to them because we're trying to tap to the kids' chain to see determinants that's happy: it's being happy with where you're at," says convention organizer Cpl. Allan Hunter.

Students registered for one of six 200 minute workshops to advance and attended a keynote address and a wrap-up session. Each session focused on issues affecting the students today, like being connected and relationships, to name just a few among others.

With seven schools and approximately 1,000 students in attendance, the convention allowed the RCMP to reach more kids in less time. And with 20 community organizations set up at conference booths and local vendors, the students were exposed to different organizations in the community which Hunter says shows they're valued.

"Engaging the community is something we wanted to do a better job of in our presentation," says Hunter. "Do our children know that you can look somethings up and we're going to do this and just stick with it. You need to change, you need to challenge yourself in the future."

— Geraldine Gamble

COVER STORY

"SOME COMMON SENSE AND SOME HUMANITY"

PROJECT TO TRANSFORM MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR YOUTH

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

NATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON EARLY INTERVENTION

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST SOCIAL ISSUE FACING YOUTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Media students from the Girls in Gangs project interviewed gang members, their carers and young people for a documentary they created on girls' involvement in gangs.

GIRLS IN GANGS

STUDENTS EXPLORE GANG RISKS THROUGH MEDIA ARTS

By Natasha Dauphinee, Girls in Gangs project manager and managing director, Union Street Media Arts, Manchester, United Kingdom

In September 2011, Union Street Media Arts, a social enterprise based in Manchester, England, embarked on a two-year project and campaign to explore girls' involvement in gangs. The project involved Cedar Mount Academy and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to engage Wythenshawe communities about the risks of gang through film, social media and performance.

Cedar Mount Academy initially recognized the need to look into the gang experience by consulting with girls and boys at the school through drama workshops and sessions facilitated by the police. At the same time, GMP had seen an increase in violence and sexual assaults by young men against girls so their engagement and prevention work in schools was becoming a large focus.

One main theme that girls voiced was the need to be respected and taught to respect themselves and not get labelled as a 'slag' or 'ho' (derogatory terms for a girl or woman perceived as being promiscuous).

With the Home Office tapped into what was happening locally, it developed a gang and youth violence strategy focusing on supporting local partnerships. To respond effectively to local gang issues, the strategy required three force areas: London, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands (Birmingham). Through Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives Fund, the Home Office funded organizations in these areas working with young people at risk of involvement in gangs. Union Street Media Arts received £250,000 for the Girls in Gangs project.

MISSING PIECES

There were only a few key pieces of research available to us in early 2011. Each identified a lack of research in the United Kingdom looking at the experiences of girls' involvement in gangs. Researchers felt the key was to use education to explore not only the experiences of girls as gang members but also as peers, girlfriends, siblings and parents. They further talked about the broader characteristics of girls' involvement and ways into gangs, and pointed to a greater diversity of experience, 'gang culture' and motivation for becoming involved than was previously understood.

To build upon that knowledge and do something that was unique, the project creatively explored the experiences of girls who unwillingly or unknowingly became associated with gang members. This exploration was done through drama and film in an effort to understand what and how their experiences unfolded. This became such an insightful and empowering process for the students that, by the end, many of them were not only no longer at risk themselves, but wanted to change the way other young people could understand the reality.

The project used creative and innovative processes to involve the young participants as much as possible. The idea was to support the boys and girls to explore the issues in a way that they could relate to and not force their

to highlight stereotypical issues and ideas because that is how they appear in the media. This also involved supporting the participants to identify the role of the media in the development of gang culture and peer pressure.

The project focused on trying to get young people to think critically about a largely normalised issue — 'this is the way it is.'

Empowering youth was at the heart of the project because we know that to really have an impact on their lives and make a sustainable change, they had to be guided in the right way.

CREATIVE EXPLORATION

In the first year, drama and media students explored the critical issues, ideas and experiences that girls have around gangs, how girls in gangs are perceived, the reasons why girls get involved, the risks, how gangs came about and what influences gangs.

The drama students created a performance that they devised with guidance from facilitators. They chose the themes, topics, characters and developed the dialogue around Jo, a girl who unwillingly gets involved in a gang. The students identified the key points they wanted the audience to take away from the performance.

The media students created a documentary, supported by a professional crew. They developed the film's objectives, researched the content, devised interview questions and carried out the interviews, and designed the lighting and camera set-up. The documentary looked at the issues in more depth, explored roles and situations, and brought in professionals and academics to contribute to the debate and talk about initiatives.

The documentary explored all the key themes and issues related to girls' involvement in gangs including first-hand information from social workers, civil servants and young people, giving a unique insight into the topic.

The second year involved bringing the performance and documentary to a wider audience. Through more workshops, the performance was developed in relation to audience feedback from the first performance. It portrayed what happens to the people around Jo as well as key relationships, exploring thoughts, motivations, choices and emotion.

The media pupils developed a website for other youth groups, schools, universities, public bodies, social services and the public to use, and designed a social media campaign to spread the message.

The resources include session plans and activities, articles, books, films and links to useful websites and resources that help explore critical issues, ideas and experiences that girls have around gangs, how girls are perceived in or seen to enter, reasons why girls get involved and the risks.

The trust built between students and facilitators was an important factor in its success. The positive environment gave the students the confidence to be open because they had a safe space to explore and respond. The students' perspectives were good because they were involved in getting feedback and discussing ideas with each other, and working to make their creative pieces relate more to the audience.

At one of the drama performances, surveys were conducted with the audience before and after the show to assess any change in ideas and attitudes. Comparing the before and after identified several changes in the audience's views:

- There was a decline in stereotypical perceptions of what a gang is.
- There was an increase in awareness of why girls may join gangs.
- There was an increase in the understanding that girls' and boys' roles in a gang may be different.
- The identified risks of getting involved with gangs were much more accurate following the performance.
- The audience clearly understood the messages the pupils were trying to portray.

The campaign designed with the young people became much bigger than anticipated. The project toured around schools, universities and community centres spreading the message and methods. Those involved were invited to do lectures and speak on the radio as well as present our work at the Houses of Parliament. The project was endorsed by national child protection organisations, politicians and social workers. The documentary has been aired on British TV four times and our online channel has received more than 12,500 views.

The website now provides a resource for thousands of people around the globe every year. Requests and comments come from individuals, professionals and students all over the world about the relevance and usefulness of it. This is indeed a global phenomenon, and understanding the real experiences of girls and women is desperately needed.

From start to finish, the progression of the students' work showed tremendous thematic development. They understood the issues well and their views changed significantly. They took leadership and ownership, and saw the importance of their new role in society. Their work created a buzz in the school, which in turn has a positive effect on the other pupils.

While these young participants were deemed to have challenging behaviour and attitudes, the project seemed to have a great positive impact on them. Their confidence increased, as did their awareness, leading to positive life choices being more available to them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.GIRLSINGANGS.ORG

In collaboration with the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Chicago, the Chicago Police Department developed a curriculum to instruct officers how to identify the characteristics of mental health crisis situations involving youth.

YOUTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

TRAINING POLICE TO IDENTIFY THOSE IN CRISIS

By Rebecca R. Skorek, research analyst, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Youth face significant delays — on average about 10 years — between the onset of signs and symptoms of mental disorders and actual intervention. Delaying access to needed mental health services can adversely affect the important developmental years of a young person's life, while linking youth to initial treatment is likely to reduce justice system involvement and school failure.

Research studies suggest that nearly 70 per cent of the two million youth arrested each year in the United States are touched by mental illnesses. The findings show that when young people with mental illnesses become involved in the juvenile justice system for minor, non-violent offenses, they're often formally processed due to unmet mental health needs.

Arrest rates are particularly high among young people who drop out of high school and have unmet or undiagnosed mental health needs. Studies have shown that almost 75 per cent are arrested within five years of dropping out. With a disproportionate number of justice-involved youth meeting diagnostic criteria for mental disorders (70 per cent compared to 20 per cent among the general population), there's a great opportunity for intervention at the time when police officers respond to service calls involving youth.

In 2013, nearly 22,000 youth arrests occurred throughout the City of Chicago, Ill. Law enforcement officers play a critical role as first responders to mental health crises by diverting individuals with mental illnesses from the criminal justice system to community-based treatment providers.

To better prepare its officers to respond to this population's needs, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) implemented the Crisis Intervention Team for Youth (CIT-Y) training. In collaboration with the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Chicago, CPD developed a curriculum to instruct officers about the ways to identify the characteristics of crisis situations involving youth and assess risk of harm to self and others while applying corresponding de-escalation techniques.

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAMS

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) use trained first responders of police-based crisis intervention alongside community, health care and advocacy partnerships. The adult CIT model originated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1988 and today there are approximately 2,500 CITs in the United States.

CPD began adult CIT training in 2004. In 2010, CPD sparked national interest by implementing the country's first 40-hour, five-day course that addresses the youth population: CIT for Youth training. CIT-Y was designed as an advanced course for officers who had already completed the adult CIT training. With a federal grant, the program held 16 CIT-Y training sessions from 2011 to 2014. More than 600 officers completed the course.

The CIT-Y model consists of a dynamic collaboration between law enforcement, school personnel, parents and community-based health providers. CIT-Y training and techniques are upheld through two depart-

ment directives including one that established the CIT program and another that outlined the procedures for operation.

The CIT-Y training aims to do the following:

- Divert youth in crisis from the juvenile justice system to community-based treatment services.
- Advance officer knowledge of the signs and symptoms of youth mental illnesses.
- Increase the likelihood of safe interactions between police and the public during youth crises.
- Enhance the officer's ability to assess youth risk of harm to self and others, and apply corresponding crisis de-escalation techniques.
- Improve officer awareness of department directives that outline appropriate responses to crises.

To achieve the training objectives, CIT-Y staff developed 18 training modules. According to CIT-Y officers, the most helpful training modules were *Community resource panel* and *Risk assessment and crisis de-escalation*, while the least helpful module was *Psychotropic medications*, due to it being overly technical.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority conducted two evaluations of CIT-Y training in 2011 and 2012. This was done through a course evaluation survey, a curriculum test and focus groups held six months after the training.

The course evaluation survey gauged officer satisfaction with the training curriculum, the curriculum test measured officer's knowledge of youth mental health and appropriate responses to youth crisis calls, and the focus groups reported officer application of CIT-Y techniques in the field.

The year two evaluation surveyed non-CIT officers so that knowledge of youth mental health and appropriate responses to youth crises could be compared to the group of participants who received CIT-Y training. Evaluators identified the strengths of the program as well as the difficulties faced by officers when implementing CIT-Y techniques.

IMPLEMENTATION

The evaluation found that officers were very satisfied with the CIT-Y curriculum, rating it as very relevant and informative. CIT-Y training significantly improved officer knowledge of risk assessment, crisis de-escalation techniques and department protocols to use when responding to youth in crisis.

Additionally, CIT-Y officers reported that the training helped them identify the signs and symptoms of youth mental illnesses, and that youth presenting with such behaviours were less likely to be formally processed when handled by a trained officer.

One participant said, "I've been able to refer some parents to [a community hospital] instead of making it a criminal issue." Focus group participants reported using CIT-Y techniques almost daily.

The focus group interviews with CIT-Y officers also highlighted the challenges encountered when applying these techniques in the field. Officers noted that implementing CIT-Y techniques was difficult due to a lack of department support. Similarly, participants noted conflicting response styles between CIT-Y trained officers and untrained officers.

One participant reported, "My biggest problem is other officers who are not CIT-trained. We had a 14-year-old [with] a knife to the grandmother. [I] was able to talk him down, but officers want[ed] to Taser the kid and take him down. Other officers think he's a bad kid [with] a behaviour problem, but he was off his meds."

One barrier to implementing these techniques was a lack of department and public awareness and, as a result, emergency calls weren't properly connected to CIT-Y officers. Officers reported that dispatch didn't always assign crisis calls to trained officers, nor do citizens know the availability of officers trained in CIT-Y. In addition, officers stated that they experienced a lack of co-operation from school administrators, teachers and security officers. Officers stated that school personnel often challenged and disagreed with CIT-Y intervention techniques.

FUTURE EVALUATION

The recommendations to improve officer application of CIT-Y techniques included increasing officer knowledge of signs and symptoms of youth mental illnesses and department support. Strategies to refresh trained officers about CIT-Y techniques and to develop rollcall training for district personnel were also recommended.

Evaluating CIT-Y continues with a focus on identifying the characteristics of crisis calls, assessing the prevalence of such calls, measuring the extent to which trained officers are linked to crisis calls, and exploring CPD responses to these calls and the impact of training.

The report, *Evaluation of Chicago Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team for Youth training: Year 1*, can be found at http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/.

Publication of the report *Evaluation of Chicago Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team for Youth training: Year 2*, is anticipated in summer 2015 and will be made available online at ICJIA's website. ▪

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM - YOUTH

CIT-Y staff developed 18 training modules to help CPD officers better respond to youth in crisis:

- Introduction, child and adolescent overview
- Child and adolescent brain development
- Signs and symptoms of youth mental illnesses
- Medical and developmental disabilities
- Psychotropic medications
- Violence and urban trauma
- Adolescents and gangs
- Risk assessment and crisis de-escalation
- Parents and teachers as allies
- Self-injurious disorders
- Substance abuse and co-occurring disorders
- Family perspectives
- Seamless integration with schools
- Department procedures for special circumstances
- Department procedures for mental health crises
- School violence and school shooters
- Community resource panel
- Q&A — Mental health scenarios

STOPPING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

ER PROJECT REACHES OUT TO YOUNG VICTIMS

By Heather Tiede, research co-ordinator, Youth Violence Research Program, Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba

It's 1:57 a.m. on a warm Saturday night in Winnipeg. Dr. Carolyn Snider is barely two hours into her shift as an emergency room physician at the Health Sciences Centre, Manitoba's primary trauma hospital, but has already treated and released two 16-year-old teenagers with lacerations resulting from a violent disagreement at a house party.

Her current patients, a 19-year-old man and 22-year-old woman, are waiting for treatment in adjoining rooms. The young man will need 14 stitches from being hit over the head with an empty liquor bottle after refusing the 22-year-old's request for a cigarette. His alleged attacker suffered a broken arm and fractured cheek bone when the victim's friends jumped in to retaliate. The two had just met that night in a downtown bar.

Although the above scenario is hypothetical, it's unfortunately all too representative of a typical summer night in emergency departments (EDs) across Canada. According to Snider, who has worked in EDs in Toronto and Winnipeg, injuries due to intentional assaults are the number one reason that youth aged 12 to 24 years visit an ED. They're also the leading cause of hospitalization among men aged 20 to 24.

"Injury is a chronic, recurring condition," says Snider. "Not only does it affect mostly young people, but right now the standard of care in many hospitals is to stitch them up and send them on their way without attempting to treat the root causes."

Unsatisfied with the status quo, Snider turned to her colleagues in the U.S. to see how a hospital-based violence intervention program might work in Canada. After extensive community consultation with clinicians, nurses, social workers, community youth workers and former gang members, the Emergency Department Violence Intervention Program (EDVIP) was created as a pilot research project to address some of the underlying reasons young people get caught up in a cycle of injury and violence.

Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, EDVIP is the only randomized control study of its kind in North America that is designed to directly assess the effectiveness of reducing repeat intentional injury among youth injured by violence by providing care both in the hospital and in the community for approximately one year starting at the time of the initial injury.

Heather Woodward is the organization's social worker and leads the EDVIP intervention team. She explains how the program works.

"Wraparound care involves meeting the youth at their bedside at the time of the injury and providing them the opportunity to work with a support worker to address any areas in their life that the youth identifies as putting them at risk of future violence," she says.

Woodward goes on to explain that there are a number of key components that make this intervention program successful. The first is that the support workers are people with whom the youth feel comfortable and can identify. The EDVIP intervention team currently has five support workers (three men and two women) who either have experience with violence or extensive experience working with youth affected by violence.

Second, it's important that the youth are met right at the bedside in the ED to take advantage of the 'teachable moment.'

"Research has shown that youth who have been injured by violence are often in a reflective and receptive state of mind," says Snider, who now serves as medical director and principal investigator for the program. "This makes the hospital emergency department the ideal setting for initiating an intervention."

The third key component is that the youth themselves are the ones who decide what may have been the contributing factors that put them at risk of violent injury.

"It's not the support worker's job to 'fix' the youth, but rather to walk with them on their journey of healing," says Woodward. Among the more commonly cited risk factors are problems with addictions, a lack of safe housing, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Snider remembers clearly the moment that she realized not enough was being done to treat the root causes of youth violence. A young man who she treated months prior for a laceration was back in her trauma room at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. She remembers wondering if there was something she could have done at his initial visit that might have helped prevent his return.

Snider went on to learn that this young man's situation was not an isolated incident: in fact, approximately 20 per cent of youth who are injured by violence will return to the emergency department with another injury within the next year.

Rick Linden, professor of Criminology at the University of Manitoba and member of the EDVIP Advisory Board, is an internationally renowned expert on young offenders. He explains that the same circumstances that often give rise to young peoples' involvement in criminal activity also leave them susceptible to becoming victims of assault.

"There is a very strong relationship between being a violent offender and serious victimization among young offenders," says Linden. "These youth come from similar backgrounds. Typically they are marginalized youth from poor families. They frequently share common lifestyles that put them at risk of victimization, and they are often involved in gangs. Whether an individual becomes a victim or an offender at any given time may be a matter of timing, luck or strength and these circumstances may change the next time around."

In fact, over the past decade in Canada, about one quarter of homicide victims and almost half of those accused were youth between the ages of 14 and 24. In Manitoba, the province with one of the highest homicide rates, more than one third of homicides in the past six years involved youth.

Snider recently completed her own analysis of youth who were injured or killed by violence in Manitoba spanning 2004 to 2011. She discovered that youth are more than four times more likely to be the victim of a serious injury or homicide if they had previously been charged with a criminal offence — even after controlling for other

Heather Pecle

As part of the EDVIP project, support worker Roxanne Ballantyne and Dr. Carolyn Snider reach out to young victims of violence in an effort to prevent their return to the emergency department.

factors such as gender, income, education, involvement with Child and Family Services and prior visits to the ED for assault injuries.

"It quickly became clear during the pilot stage of our study that we needed support and input from the justice and law enforcement sectors," Dr. Snider explains. As a result, a new partnership with the Winnipeg Police Service was formed.

S/Sgt. Bob Chrismas of the Winnipeg Police Service serves as a liaison between the police and the EDVIP team. He explains how programs such as EDVIP are part of "the new economics of policing."

"EDVIP is an excellent example of this type of proactive, intervention-based approach. The Winnipeg Police Service has adopted crime prevention through social development as its crime prevention approach, and therefore has fully embraced the EDVIP as a partner and supports it as a great example of social innovation and collaboration."

Chrismas says the program and its team are having a positive impact.

"I have been moved by the team's compassion and dedication to community and to the individual clients; their devotion is clearly behind their outstanding successes after the first year. They are truly changing the lives of violence-affected youth. I believe this model will be adopted by emergency departments in hospitals across Canada."

Although the program is still in its pilot stage and won't have any concrete results to report for another year, Snider says the program's participants have made great strides.

"Many [youth] are back in school or have full-time jobs. Some are volunteering their time at ceremonies and helping to deliver furniture and household items in the community. Most of our youth are now safely housed. A lot of the youth who are Aboriginal have been introduced — or re-introduced — to their culture and ceremony and are participating in and learning about sweat lodges, sun dances and pow wows. Most importantly, we clearly see a number of our youth developing independence and taking responsibility for their own lives."

As the many community partners that work closely with EDVIP know, even small achievements can make huge differences in the lives of the young people served by this program. •

City of Gatineau

From left to right, Gatineau artists Marin Mitrasinovic, Patrick Moss and Lukasz Bober pose in front of their mural, *Gatineau, in movement*

GRAFFITI IN GATINEAU

PROGRAM ENCOURAGES ARTFUL EXPRESSION

By Marie-Noëlle St-Pierre, program officer, and Josiane Cossette, youth commission, City of Gatineau

In many large cities, graffiti vandalism and tagging are a big problem. Gatineau, Que., is no exception, where close to 100 new tags crop up every year. Yet as the fourth largest city in Quebec and with close to 300,000 residents, things could be a lot worse.

Fifteen years ago, the former municipalities that now make up the City of Gatineau received more than 200 graffiti and tagging complaints each year. But the introduction of an innovative program mobilizing local youth has cut that number in half, as it has in other cities facing the same challenge.

At the heart of the Graffiti and Tagging Prevention and Support Program, created in 2001, is the Gatineau Youth Commission. Through the commission, local teens are able to make youth-specific recommendations to city council. A multidisciplinary team made up of representatives from the Gatineau Police Service; Public Works; Recreation, Sports and Community Development Services and *L'Alternative Outaouais*, a local youth organization, recommended that the city recognize graffiti as a form of urban art instead of punishing graffiti artists.

Over the next 10 years, the Gatineau Youth Commission made improvements to and spearheaded the program. Now administered by Recreation, Sports and Community Development Services, the program has three components: prevention, cleanup and by-laws. Specific objectives are set and achieved through the implementation of concrete measures.

The goal of the prevention component is to help people better understand tags and graffiti and foster the respectful use of graffiti on public and private property. The focus is on informing, raising awareness and promoting graffiti as urban art.

City officials understand that kids yearn to express themselves, through graffiti or otherwise. They decided to entrust the city's youth with more than 40 walls located in various parks and three tunnels, where they can paint graffiti legally and safely as they learn the importance of respecting private and public property.

In partnership with local agencies, the city organizes youth awareness workshops, where young graffiti artists are able to showcase their talent and at the same time teach their peers how to practise their art lawfully in designated areas.

The city also sponsors an annual graffiti competition, which authorizes the creation of frescoes. Frescoes are in line with other objectives, such as embellishing neighbourhoods, reinforcing the sense of belonging and feeling of safety of citizens and reducing the number of illegal tags and graffiti based on respect for one's surroundings.

Local agencies, including the Gatineau Police Service and Recreation, Sports and Community Development Services, are firm believers in prevention. They meet with young offenders to tell them about the program, explain cleanup-related costs and consequences, and give them the chance to make a positive contribution.

In terms of cleanup and by-laws, it's a shared responsibility and collective effort aimed at limiting the proliferation of illegal tags and graffiti, and deterring offenders.

The City of Gatineau has also developed counter-vandalism strategies and encourages its partners to quickly remove illegal markings. The focus is on supporting property owners by providing them with tips and advice and setting up an illegal graffiti cleanup project in partnership with a youth organization.

Engaging with young street artists and the public is the best way to demystify graffiti as a dark form of self-expression. City officials are confident that a proactive, collaborative approach involving youth, graffiti artists and residents will ensure the ongoing success of the program. ●

ON THE RIGHT PATH

EX-GANG MEMBER SHARES HIS PAST TO HELP YOUTH

After spending his late teens and early 20s in a gang dealing drugs and getting into trouble, Jordan Bunz turned his life around. Today, Bunz volunteers with police to speak to youth about his experience. Gazette writer Deirdre Seiden spoke to him about how he hopes his story helps young people make better choices.

WHY DID YOU JOIN A GANG?

I did it because I was a bored, stupid kid. I enjoyed it. It was scary. It was exciting. People from high school feared you and it seemed like they respected you. But that really started to lose its lustre after a while because the police got to have an idea of who you are and start harassing you. You start racking up criminal charges and making enemies. By 24, I was in all kinds of trouble — I was going to jail.

WHAT MADE YOU GET OUT?

I think the bad experiences I had helped me mature. One of the deciding factors for me was when I got sentenced to a year in jail for possession of a handgun. While I was in there, I looked around me and I was stuck with these people 24/7 and I was just like, 'This is the bracket of society that I chose to put myself in and I don't feel like I belong here.'

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE TALKING TO YOUTH?

One of the things I do is with Sgt. Lindsey Houghton from the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit in B.C. We go and speak at schools. I talk about the choices I made in my life that led me down the path of gang involvement and gang membership.

My message is to get students to stop and think when they're in a moment where they're with friends and there is potential for trouble, it's not all fun and games. I try to show them that the choices they make in their day-to-day life can have serious consequences that will resonate through today and beyond by taking them through my story. That's one thing that a lot of young people don't understand.

WHAT'S THE RESPONSE LIKE?

The kids pay very close attention. We can hear a pin drop for the duration of the presentation because it's pretty hard-hitting material. I use the presentation as a story. Kids don't want to listen to facts and figures for an hour. By the time the presentation is finished, they're pretty invested in the story. And we've had nothing but kids coming up to us after and asking us questions.

WHAT DO THEY ASK?

I get asked is if I'm scared if someone is going to come back after me. It's such an easy question to answer. I'm not scared. I've been out of it now for several years now. Everyone that was involved when I was involved is either dead or doing life in prison. There's not a long life expectancy when you're in a gang.

WHY DO YOU SHARE YOUR STORY?

To be able to go out and take all the experiences I've had and maybe spin them into a positive by helping other people. Maybe a few kids will decide that that's not what they want to do with their life and that's not the direction they want their life to go in.

DOES THE MESSAGE CARRY MORE POWER COMING FROM YOU THAN, SAY, THE POLICE?

I think the kids can relate to a lot of my stories because I start talking about my life from about Grade 6 to the present. I purposefully spend more time on the school years of my life than the gang years because then these kids realize that they're having a lot of the same experiences that I did. By listening to the story they can see my life get progressively worse as I make my choices.

The one great thing about doing this with Lindsey is the fact that he goes first and does the police perspective on gangs and then I go. And I put a personal touch on the police know-ledge of gangs. So I think that both of us together are really effective. ●

Jordan Bunz, an ex-gang member, speaks to youth about how the choices he made as a young man led to his life today.

just THE FACTS

PEOPLE SMUGGLING

People smuggling is the low-risk, high-profit business of illegally moving people from one country to another often in their desperate attempts to escape poverty, a natural disaster, conflict or political instability. Thousands of illegal immigrants die each year in transit to their destinations as a result of the indifferent or deliberate actions of smugglers. As these facts show, it's an increasingly organized and deadly business.

People smuggling is distinct from human trafficking. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), smuggling involves the procurement for financial or other material benefit of the illegal entry of a person into a state of which that person isn't a national or resident whereas human trafficking is the acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception.

According to the 2009 UNDP Human Development Report, there are an estimated 30 million irregular international migrants in the world, a significant number of whom paid for assistance to illegally cross borders.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that in the first nine months of 2014, at least 4,077 migrants died while being smuggled abroad. This is 30 per cent higher than the recorded deaths for the whole of 2013.

The IOM reports these figures still fail to capture the true number of fatalities, due to disappearances and the difficulty of reporting and confirming deaths.

In 2014, 75 per cent of migrant deaths occurred in the Mediterranean region. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says at least 207,000 people crossed this region in the beginning of that year.

According to a January 2013 article in The Guardian, more than 12,000 migrants risked their lives crossing the Mediterranean to reach Italy and Malta in 2013, and 700 died doing so. The number of dead more than quadrupled in 2014 to 3,279.

People smuggling can occur by air, sea or land, says UNODC. The majority of smuggling deaths occur at sea although deaths also occur while crossing deserts, while crammed in transit and from the maltreatment and abusive treatment of the smugglers.

Based on figures provided by the UN Refugee Agency, the world's four deadliest sea crossings in 2014 were the Mediterranean Sea with 3,419 deaths, the Bay of Bengal with 540 deaths, the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea with 342 deaths, and the Caribbean Sea with 71 deaths.

According to INTERPOL, people smuggling takes place on all scales. However, the international dimension of this crime makes it especially attractive and lucrative to organized networks.

The UNODC website reports that two smuggling routes — East, North and West Africa to Europe, and South America to North America — generate around $6.75 billion a year for criminals operating in these regions.

There are an estimated three million illegal entries into the United States each year, according to UNODC.

The fees charged for smuggling migrants can vary widely depending on the point of origin, says a UNODC factsheet. Migrants smuggled across the border between Mexico and the United States pay about $2,000, while migrants from beyond Mexico could pay as much as $10,000.

According to INTERPOL, people smuggling networks often change their routes and methods in response to legislative and law enforcement activities. The routes used by people smugglers can be simple and direct, or circuitous. The time between departure and arrival may vary from a few days to several months or even years.

Canada has experienced incidents of large non-commercial vessels of several hundred passengers arranged by smugglers, reports UNODC. One case was the Ocean Lady, a vessel that was intercepted off the coast of British Columbia on Aug. 12, 2010 carrying 492 Sri Lankan passengers.

In 2010, there were 5,000 irregular maritime arrivals in Australia with most migrants by sea arriving at or brought to offshore territories, says the same UNODC report.

— Compiled by Katherine Ashton

PUTTING A NAME TO A FACE

CALGARY POLICE GETS NEW FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

By Dorothy Davidson

A teenage boy is communicating online with an undercover cop. He only had a first name, and the Calgary Police Service (CPS) detective wasn't even sure if that name was real or fake.

In fact, Det. David Palmer had no leads and had nowhere left to turn in the child abuse investigation — until he got a profile picture that the offender had used online.

"I remembered we had access to new facial recognition software and thought, 'Why don't we submit it and see?'" says Palmer.

QUICK MATCH

CPS is the first police agency in Canada to get the machine tool to help solve crimes.

"We've really been keeping our eye on facial recognition technology for some time," says Ian Gregory, a supervisor with the CPS Criminal Identification Unit. "We were waiting for the technology to mature enough to a point where it began to be useful in investigations."

The process has always been manual at CPS. Photo lineup clerks would go through a mug-shot database of images of those charged with criminal offences in Calgary and manually try to identify suspects or victims that way.

Athol Peng, a project manager in CPS's Information Communication and Technology Section, says the new technology is far more efficient.

"Sometimes you have an incident where you can see a face, but you can't put a name to the face," says Peng. "In the past, someone would look for a male with brown hair of a certain age and height and then they would take one picture at a time and go through it. Now, the system takes less than 30 seconds to do a profile and you're done."

The technology is similar to a fingerprint matching process. It takes an image of a face, applies a matching algorithm — plotting landmark features like the eyes, nose and mouth — and establishes a series of measurements that describe that face in mathematical terms.

It then analyses incoming images and compares those facial features to eliminate non-matches and bring back the best possible matches.

Palmer thought it was a shot in the dark because the software only searches the CPS mug-shot database of approximately 500,000 images. If the offender wasn't previously arrested in Calgary, it wouldn't turn up a match.

"But I had no other options at that point, so I sent it in and then we got this hit back. He was charged exactly a year earlier for doing exactly the same thing," says Palmer. "It was perfect and the match is unbelievable."

ADDED VALUE

The software isn't a panacea, nature of child education, says Gregory. CPS is using it to further investigations.

"We provide that information to an investigator and then the investigator has to use that and take further investigative steps to determine whether or not there's a valid suspect for their case," says Gregory.

Several investigators have used the new technology, and several matches have been made, but they can't say what crimes have been solved at this point because most are still in the follow-up stage.

But Gregory says as with any limitations to a fingerprint system, there really is no way to quantify the value of any one particular match, but it will increase their efficiency going forward.

"To have a part of the fingerprint world for 20 years and see more exciting incidents were getting latent fingerprints from the crime scenes and identifying someone," says Gregory. "As the police do their investigative piece of technology is always evolving. You feel like you're contributing to a new world out there."

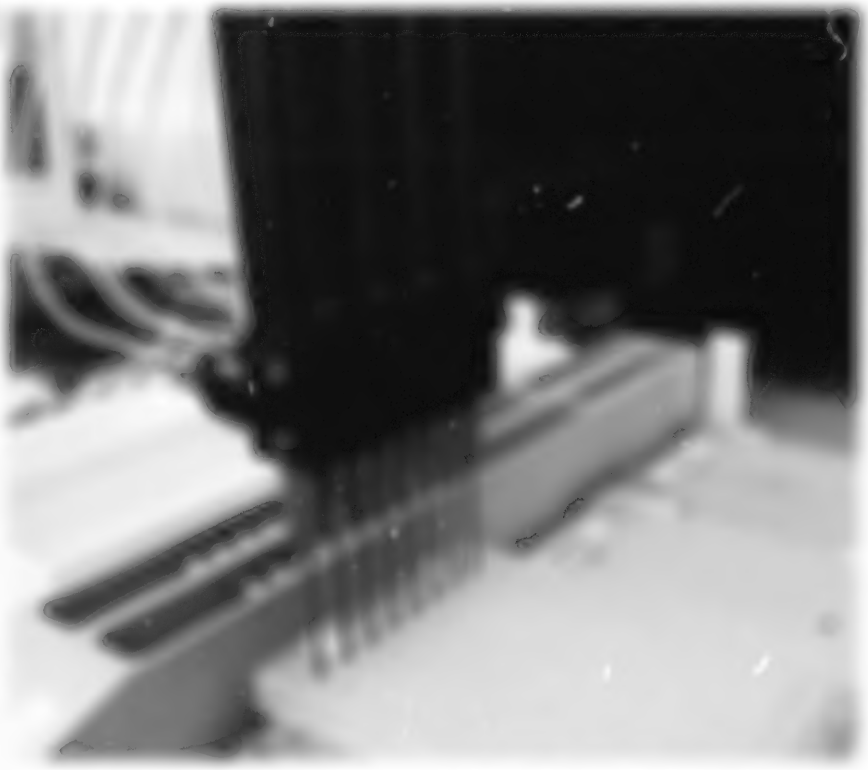
And while Palmer was originally skeptical that the technology would turn up a match, he now knows its value.

"I'm thinking this technology is something that's going to be more accepted in the future, but this was extremely successful," says Palmer. "It was the break in the case that I needed and everything fell into place." ■

FEATURED SUBMISSION

HOPE ON THE HORIZON

NEW DNA TOOLS TO SUPPORT MISSING PERSONS CASES



[illegible] the DNA profile of the victim or [illegible] offender is identified as a [illegible].

During the course of routine crime [illegible] a crime scene officer [illegible] DNA profile of the offender and has found no other business to [illegible] comparing a known DNA against DNA found at crime scenes [illegible] the [illegible] a specific search would be [illegible] and provide investigative leads. Whenever possible, victims of crime [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] DNA.

The second [illegible] the Volunteer Person Index, which will [illegible] a DNA profile [illegible] applications of the [illegible] to [illegible] DNA profiles obtained or retained for persons [illegible] a criminal or missing person investigation. A specific [illegible] will [illegible] [illegible] investigations. DNA [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

CONVERSATIONS OVER CONFESSIONS

NEW TOOL AVAILABLE FOR POLICE RESEARCH

LATEST RESEARCH IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

The following are excerpts from recent research related to justice and law enforcement and reflect the views and opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organizations for which they work.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING STRESS AMONG POLICE DETAINEES

Jason Payne, Sarah Macgregor and Hayley McDonald

It's generally accepted that a person's living situation, in particular their experience of homelessness and housing stress, can have both long-lasting and wide-ranging consequences.

This paper provides a much-needed examination of homelessness and housing stress among Australia's criminal justice population. Using data from the Australian Institute of Criminology's (AIC) Drug Use Monitoring [DUMA] program, this study examines the prevalence and nature of homelessness among a sample of police detainees.

Homelessness has long been recognised as an important factor influencing participation in crime. However, in Australia there's comparatively little literature that estimates the prevalence of homelessness among the criminal justice population and importantly, its links to other risk factors. Since 1999, the DUMA program has consistently reported that around one in 10 detainees were 'sleeping rough', either on the street or in emergency accommodation, for most of the time preceding their arrest.

However, recently DUMA has expanded its survey to capture both secondary and tertiary homelessness, and by doing so yielded a much higher prevalence (22 per cent) of housing stress among the detainee population. Further, the study also estimates that more than one in 10 police detainees remain uncertain about their housing and accommodation situation and are not confident of having somewhere to live when they are released.

Having arrived at a more accurate picture of the prevalence of homelessness, attention was then given to the somewhat difficult circumstances faced by those involved in the criminal justice system. It found that family relationship problems were the most frequently cited reason for needing to live on the street or in a temporary location, with financial problems, property eviction and drug problems also frequently cited. Perhaps the most important finding was the diversity of reasons given by detainees, suggesting that efforts to address housing stress require a more individualised response.

Finally, comparative analysis across a range of demographic, prior offending and drug use indicators confirmed the complexity of homelessness and its links to a range of other challenging life circumstances and risk factors. In particular, homeless detainees reported comparatively high rates of illicit drug and alcohol use, along with a more recent history of contact with the police and the criminal justice system. Taken together, these results suggest that responding to crime and repeat offending requires an adequate and planned response to both substance use and housing stress/exclusion.

Correctional service agencies have long not only confirm a relatively high prevalence of homelessness among the police detainee population, but also the links between homelessness and prior criminal justice system contact. Further, these data highlight the extent to which detainees are uncertain about their future housing prospects, adding support for current approaches that identify safe and secure housing as a significant priority for successful post-release reintegration.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT: WWW.AIC.GOV.AU

THE START OF A CRIMINAL CAREER: DOES THE TYPE OF DEBUT OFFENCE PREDICT FUTURE OFFENDING?

Natalie Sisson and Christine Cooper

The primary aim of this study was to examine the relationship between an offender's debut offence and their future offending. A debut offence was defined as the offence for which an offender received their first caution or conviction.

The study specifically looked at whether the type of debut offence committed predicted future chronic or serious offending careers, and whether the type of debut offence and subsequent offending had changed over time.

Identifying and targeting offenders who are more likely to become one of the small group of chronic offenders responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, at an early stage of their criminal career, is a promising approach to crime prevention.

METHODOLOGY

The Police National Computer (PNC) contains information on all recordable person offences that have taken place in England and Wales.

We obtained information on all first-time entrants to the criminal justice system for 2001, 2005 and 2009. Data from 2001 allowed a maximum follow-up period of nine years to year-end 2009, while the 2005 cohort enabled us to examine the profile of chronic offenders and, alongside the 2009 cohort, enabled us the proportion and volume of different debut offence types.

There were three primary questions of interest.

Does the type of debut offence predict chronic re-offending over time? Does the type of debut offence predict serious re-offending over time? Has the volume and type of debut offences changed over time?

RESULTS

- There were 228,537 individuals on the PNC who had committed their first proven offence in 2008. Around three-quarters of the cohort were male and over one-third were aged 10 to 17 years at the time of their first offence.
- About one-third of these debut offences were acquisitive, one-fifth were violence and one-tenth were categorized as sex-related crimes. Just under half of the 2008 cohort committed a further proven offence during the nine-year follow-up period. However, five per cent of the cohort became chronic offenders (committing 15 or more offences) over the follow-up period.
- Those offenders who had committed robbery, burglary or vehicle theft as their debut offence were almost three times more likely to be chronic offenders compared with the cohort overall.
- The type of debut offence committed was a significant predictor of chronic offending status, taking into consideration gender and age at debut offence. For example, one in five young men aged 10 to 17 years at their first conviction/conviction for robbery went on to be a chronic offender, three in five re-offended while only one in five did not commit a further proven offence. The results for burglary and vehicle theft were similar.

CONCLUSIONS

This study adds to the evidence base, showing that offenders who committed robbery, burglary or vehicle theft as their debut offence in 2008 were more likely to become chronic offenders. This small group of chronic offenders were responsible for almost half of all the further proven offences committed by the cohort.

This gives support to the proposition that preventing some kinds of offending may be promising as a way of reducing overall levels of crime. However, the analysis does not explain why offenders of these three acquisitive crimes are more likely to become chronic offenders, or whether, with fewer people committing burglary and vehicle crime as a debut offence, other crime types will take their place as predictors of chronic offending.

The findings suggest that providing programs to prevent and reduce robbery offences along with programs to turn around the lives of young male offenders committing key debut offences will be important in reducing crime in the future.

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WWW.GOV.UK

LINKING REFUGEE YOUTH AND FAMILIES TO POSITIVE SOCIAL SUPPORTS

LINKing Refugee Youth and Families to Positive Social Supports (LINK) is an innovative Canadian program designed to prevent the involvement of refugee youth in criminal and gang-related activity.

LINK was implemented by the Newcomer Employment and Education Development Services Inc. and has assisted 229 youth.

PARTICIPANTS

Youth referred to the program underwent an assessment of risk and those who participated in the program were between 12 and 18 years and were deemed at risk of involvement in gang activity due to factors such as:

- Past experiences of trauma and violence
- Interaction with delinquent peers causing "street socialization"
- Poor parental supervision
- Educational frustration and low attachment to school

All the participants had Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) status, 47 per cent had prior exposure to trauma and violence and, according to self-reports, none of them had a prior record of offending. The LINK program engaged with 109 female and 110 male clients in the pilot project. Thirty-five of the participants fell in the highest risk category.

KEY ELEMENTS

The LINK program has six components provided over one year. All participants received the first four components while those assessed at the highest risk received all the components and had their families involved.

Education on Canadian society — each client participated in 60 hours of workshops designed to provide information on Canada and to help reduce isolation and increase success at school, home and with peers.

Mentorship — participants received 72 hours of one-on-one or group-based mentoring designed to introduce them to community resources, provide social and emotional support and supervision, and provide positive adult role models for youth.

Educational support — to increase chances of success in school, activities included LINK staff liaison with teachers and administrative school staff, and in-school visits to provide support.

Recreational activities — designed to decrease isolation and loneliness and increase the development of positive peer relationships.

Family mentorship — designed to provide opportunities to strengthen parent-child bonds and reduce the risk of developing intergenerational cultural conflict. LINK matched families of higher risk participants with Canadian families.

Referrals — Many of the refugee families participating in LINK had experienced severe trauma before arrival in Canada. Referrals to counselling and mental health services, cultural associations, housing, employment and education supports were important aspects of the LINK project.

FINDINGS

- The program reached 95 per cent of the total number it hoped to serve, and was successful in reaching those high-risk refugee youth and families it targeted.
- The program had a retention rate of 98 per cent, with the majority of youth and families staying active in the project for the full year of their involvement.
- A total of 436 school visits were conducted, with an average of 12 visits per month.
- 26 recreational family gatherings were implemented, while 12 were originally anticipated.

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SEARCHING FOR CLOSURE

RIVER RESEARCH STUDY TO FURTHER MISSING PERSONS' CASES

By Sigrid Forberg

When a person is missing and presumed dead, neither family nor investigators can have closure until his or her body is recovered.

With that in mind, the RCMP's Historical Case Unit in Saskatchewan conducts an annual river search for missing persons.

But Dr. Ernest Walker, a forensic anthropologist with the Major Crimes Unit in Saskatchewan, says the team noticed that sometimes bodies go into the river system and are never found. So they suggested putting something in the water to see where it goes.

"What we're looking for is a predictive model because we know bodies can travel a long way," says Walker. "We have to get a grip on all the factors like what time of year it is, where a body goes in, how they go in, the temperature and the flow rate."

TRACKING IN THE RIVER

In September 2013, Walker and his team implanted a tracking device on a pig carcass and released it into the North Saskatchewan River near the small city of North Battleford.

"We've pulled cadavers out of the river in various locations and noticed they've sometimes travelled several kilometres before being discovered," says Cpl. Tyler Hadland of the Historical Cases Unit.

As soon as they put the pig into the river, it immediately started to float away. But it didn't get very far before it got stuck on a sandbar. When the team went back to collect the pig a few days later, they couldn't find the animal or the transponder. Hadland says they believe it went to rest close to the shore and animals devoured it, dragging it to a different location.

"I think the moral of the story is that just because a body goes into the water, it doesn't necessarily mean it stays in the water," says Walker. "And that's something we hadn't contemplated."

They tried again in February 2014 in the South Saskatchewan River in Saskatoon. Because of the temperature of the water, the pig carcass sank right to the bottom of the river and stayed there until the water warmed up in the spring.

The body then floated down the river and eventually came to rest on a riverbank. But by the time they arrived to pick it up, only the tracking device was left.

GATHERING DATA

The Historical Case Unit's Sgt. Kenneth Palen says that while this type of hands-on research isn't typically the work of investigative units, it gathers information to potentially solve current or cold cases. And it could help police in future cases narrow down search areas when a person goes into a body of water.

Hadland adds that having police officers participate in this research is an advantage because they're typically involved in a case from the beginning and may have access to information independent researchers wouldn't.

Early on, the team also got the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency involved.

Iain Phillips, a researcher with the provincial body, provides support in tracking the pigs. Once they recover a carcass, he plans to study the aquatic insects it attracts. His research will help develop forensic tools for future investigations.

"By studying the life stages of insects that have colonized the body, we can determine how long it's been since the body was submerged," says Phillips. "A lot of times we'll already know where a missing person originated from. But if we don't, this could provide us that evidence."

In the future, the team plans to launch a few pigs at once — increasing the likelihood of recovering a carcass they can actually study — to test whether two bodies launched under the same circumstances would take the same paths. Palen adds the ultimate goal of all this research is to find closure for those who need it.

"We know it's such a hard thing for the family not knowing where their loved ones are. They know they went into the water, but why can't they be found, why aren't the police doing anything?" says Palen. "But with this and the river searches, we can send updates to the family to show them that their case is still open and that we're looking for their loved ones." •

The Historical Case Unit searches for its pig carcass in the river, using a transponder they surgically implanted in the pig.

Josh Ryan